

## The Grands Going Forward

Following our re-appointment as coaches to the GB Grands squads, we set out below our plans leading towards the 2021 World Championships in Hong Kong.

Whilst the Grands performed well at the 2018 Europeans, with a record of 7 medals in total, it was another matter at the 2019 Worlds in Thailand. The standard of non-European crews is much higher than those from Europe. We paddled in Thailand to the best of our capabilities, but we were not up to the standard of the crews from the rest of the world. Why? There are two reasons, namely :

- The base of paddlers from which the crew is chosen is not big enough and not of a high enough quality, and
- Too many of the crew are not racing in the appropriate age category, namely paddling in Senior B despite being over 60.

It is apparent to us that paddlers of the required standard are not coming through from the Senior A squad as should be the case, and so the average age of the Senior B crew is getting older with every year that passes by. This cannot continue if the Grands are to achieve the results that the paddlers are looking for.

The solution to rectify the position the Grands are currently in and move forward positively is :

- To start a Senior C crew, and
- To race only small boat crews until standard crews of the necessary standard become apparent. This may be in 2021.

So for 2020, we will be running the following small boat crews :

- Senior B Mixed, and
- Senior C Open

We expect the standard of these two crews to be very high.

Currently, there is no intention of running a small boat Senior B womens crew for 2020 as we do not think that there will be enough Senior B women of the required standard. **However**, this intention may change following the first BNTS session.

Attendance at BNTS training sessions will be by invitation only. However, the first BNTS session to be held on Saturday, 26 October 2019 will be open to paddlers either new to the Grands or of only one year's experience with the Grands. At this first BNTS session, paddlers will be required to take part in various land based fitness tests as part of the day's training. This fitness test will comprise a range of exercises to determine general fitness and strength sufficient to move bodyweight.

Paddlers attending this first BNTS will be expected to demonstrate that they are able to hook water, move the dragon boat and not the water, and to hold the timing.

Shortly after this first BNTS session, paddlers who attend and meet the required standards, together with existing Grands paddlers of known standard, will be invited to attend subsequent BNTS sessions.

Eligible paddlers wishing to attend this first BNTS session should contact us at :  
**[gd-bnts@dragonboat.org.uk](mailto:gd-bnts@dragonboat.org.uk)**

**Vaughn Collings & Ian Bowers**

GB Grands coaches